

‘EXEGETICAL AMNESIA’ AND ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ: THE ‘FAITH OF CHRIST’ IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY PAULINE SCHOLARSHIP

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Abstract

Contemporary scholarship holds, almost unanimously, that Johannes Haußleiter was the first to suggest that Paul’s expression *πίστις Χριστοῦ* should be interpreted as the ‘faith(fulness) of Christ’. His article of 1891 is said to have initiated the ongoing debate, now more current than ever. Such an assessment of the controversy’s origins, however, cannot be maintained. Beginning already in the 1820s a surprisingly rich and nuanced discussion of the ambivalent Pauline phrase can be seen. Then, a number of scholars from rather different theological camps already considered and favoured the subjective genitive. The present study seeks to recover the semantic, grammatical, syntactical, and theological aspects put forward in this past (and ‘lost’) exegetical literature. Such retrospection, while not weighing the pros and cons for the subjective or the objective interpretation, helps put into perspective the arguments and responses in the present debate. Then and now, scholars’ contextualization of their readings is in keeping with their respective diverse theological and philosophical frames of reference.

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most recent and most comprehensive contributions to the study of Paul’s theology is Richard Longenecker’s *Introducing Romans*.¹ Under the heading ‘Major Interpretive Approaches Prominent Today’ he deals with ‘The *Πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* Theme’, arguing that this is ‘an issue that must be faced

My thanks are due to Jordash Kiffiak both for his valuable comments and for improving the English style of this essay. If not otherwise indicated, all translations throughout this essay are my own.

¹ Richard Longenecker, *Introducing Romans: Critical Issues in Paul’s Most Famous Letter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011).

by every interpreter today'.² In this essay I will not review and assess the arguments in favour of and against one or the other reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ, nor do I intend to offer groundbreaking exegetical insights into this syntagma.³ Rather, my goal is to have a closer look at the fascinating history of interpretation, especially with respect to the subjective reading. Borrowing a phrase from Dale Allison, Richard Hays has stated in the introduction to the second edition of his *Faith of Jesus Christ*: 'By studying the history of interpretation, we seek to overcome "exegetical amnesia" and "to recover what has been lost/and found and lost again and again"'.⁴ Indeed, there is much to recover with respect to the history of the πίστις Χριστοῦ issue.⁵

I take as my starting point Longenecker's observations on the origin of the subjective reading, as they reflect a common stance on this question:

From the late nineteenth century to the present...there has been a rising tide of scholarly opinion that understands Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive, and so argues that πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ should be read as 'the faith/faithfulness of Jesus Christ'. This reading was first proposed by Johannes Haußleiter at the close of the nineteenth century...Karl Barth was the first commentary writer on Romans to espouse such an understanding in his *Römerbrief* in 1919...⁶

² Ibid., pp. 317–24, at 317. Longenecker raised his voice in favour of the subjective reading almost 50 years ago (see e.g. his *Paul, the Apostle of Liberty* [New York: Harper & Row, 1964], 149–51; id., 'The Obedience of Christ in the Theology of the Early Church', in Robert J. Banks (ed.), *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology Presented to L. L. Morris on his 60th Birthday* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974], pp. 141–52).

³ My own interpretation of the phrase is outlined in Benjamin Schließer, *Abraham's Faith in Romans 4: Paul's Concept of Faith in Light of the History of Reception of Genesis 15:6* (WUNT 2/224; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), pp. 257–80; id., *Was ist Glaube? Paulinische Perspektiven* (Theologische Studien, Neue Folge 3; Zürich: TVZ, 2011), pp. 34–9, 97–9.

⁴ Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11* (2nd edn. with a new introduction; The Biblical Resource Series; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), p. lii, borrowing a term from Dale Allison (cf. Dale C. Allison, 'Exegetical Amnesia in James', *ETL* 86 [2000], pp. 162–6).

⁵ Hays (*Faith of Jesus Christ*, p. li) notes that Gerald Janzen has found a number of quotations in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's (1772–1834) work, which perceive the individual Christian's faith as 'a participation in the fidelity of Christ' (J. Gerald Janzen, 'Coleridge and *Pistis Christou*', *ExpTim* 107 [1993], pp. 265–8, at 266).

⁶ Longenecker, *Introducing Romans*, p. 318. The references are to Johannes Haußleiter, 'Der Glaube Jesu Christi und der christliche Glaube: Ein Beitrag zur Erklärung des Römerbriefes', *NKZ* 2 (1891), pp. 109–45, 205–30 = (slightly revised) id., *Der Glaube Jesu Christi und der christliche Glaube: Ein Beitrag zur*

My study challenges these two historical claims regarding Haußleiter and Barth by digging up 'lost' and forgotten material from the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. In short, its purpose is to explore the origins of the 'faith of Christ' reading in the critical era of biblical scholarship.⁷ I will show that already from the 1820s onwards there is evidence that scholars from rather different theological camps have argued for quite distinct subjective genitive interpretations and that they did so on the basis of a number of semantic, grammatical, syntactical, and theological arguments.

Those who follow the current debate will easily recognize that many of the 'old' arguments in support of the subjective reading have siblings, if not twins, in the present discussion,⁸ and here and there I will draw attention to particularly telling examples. Furthermore, an intriguing question—one that is also pertinent to contemporary exegesis—will continually be present in the subtext of the discussion: to what extent did the ideological or theological lens of the authors affect their perspective on this exegetical issue? In the conclusion I will offer some tentative thoughts on this question.

Erklärung des Römerbriefes (Erlangen and Leipzig: Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1891); Karl Barth, *Der Römerbrief (erste Fassung)*, 1919 (Gesamtausgabe, II, Akademische Werke 16, ed. Hermann Schmidt; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1985).

⁷ The focus and goal of this survey, therefore, differs markedly from those studies that trace the subjective genitive reading in pre-modern times, particularly in patristic writings. As is well known, modern interpretations of the Fathers' comments contradict each other diametrically, which is not least due to the fact that the statements of the Fathers seem as ambiguous as Paul's own. Some argue that Christian tradition during the first three centuries clearly bears witness to interest in the faith of Jesus Christ (e.g. Ian G. Wallis, *The Faith of Christ in Early Christian Traditions* [SNTSMS 84; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995]; Michael R. Whittington, "After ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ: Neglected Evidence from the Apostolic Fathers," *JTS* 61 [2010], pp. 82–109). others remain sceptical (e.g. Roy A. Harrisville III, 'ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ: Witness of the Fathers', *NovT* 36 [1994], pp. 233–41; Mark W. Elliott, 'Πίστις Χριστοῦ in the Church Fathers and Beyond', in Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle [eds.], *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical and Theological Studies* [Carlisle: Paternoster, 2009], pp. 277–89).

⁸ On the main exegetical points in the current debate, see e.g. Matthew C. Easter, 'The *Pistis Christou* Debate: Main Arguments and Responses in Summary', *CBR* 9 (2010), pp. 33–47; Karl Friedrich Ulrichs, *Christusglaube: Studien zum Syntagma πίστις Χριστοῦ und zum paulinischen Verständnis von Glaube und Rechtfertigung* (WUNT 2/227; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), pp. 1–70; Debbie Hunn, 'Debating the Faithfulness of Jesus Christ in Twentieth Century Scholarship', in Bird and Sprinkle (eds.), *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, pp. 15–31; Arland Hultgren, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), pp. 623–61.

II. THE 'FAITH OF CHRIST' AND THE RATIONALIST IDEOLOGY OF PERFECTIBILITY

2.1. *Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus: Jesus' Exemplary 'Sincerity of Conviction'*

Longenecker's insinuation regarding the innovative character of Haußleiter's reading is either implicitly shared or explicitly stated by many; by way of example, I refer to two prominent proponents of the subjective reading: Morna Hooker⁹ and Richard Hays.¹⁰ Among the very few exceptions are George Howard, who states that '[t]he subjective genitive was preferred by a few scholars in the nineteenth century', referring to Johann Peter Lange (see below, 3.2),¹¹ and more recently Debbie Hunn, who, presumably drawing on Howard, notes: 'In the nineteenth century, a few scholars commented briefly on πίστις Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive, but Johannes Haußleiter gave it the first known substantial treatment in 1891'.¹² In fact, Haußleiter himself evokes the impression that his approach lacks exegetical precursors. He considers his time to be characterized by the desire to be immersed in the mystery of the inner human development of Christ. Whereas in the time of Luther such psychological

⁹ Morna Hooker, 'Interchange and Suffering' (1981), in *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 42–55, at 47, n. 8: 'The debate goes back to a suggestion made by Haussleiter in an article published in 1891.' Cf. eadem, 'Introduction', in *From Adam to Christ*, pp. 1–10, at 7.

¹⁰ Hays, *Faith*, p. 142: 'The possibility that Paul's expression πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ should be interpreted as "the faith of Jesus Christ" was introduced into modern NT scholarship in 1891 by Johannes Haussleiter'. Cf. Ulrichs, *Christusglaube*, p. 8; R. Michael Allen, *The Christ's Faith: A Dogmatic Account* (T & T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology; London: T & T Clark, 2009), p. 9.

¹¹ George Howard, 'Notes and Observations on the "Faith of Christ"', *HTR* 60 (1967), pp. 459–65, at 461. Cf. id., 'The "Faith of Christ"', *ExpTim* 85 (1974), pp. 212–15, at 212. Contrary to Howard's insinuation, James MacKnight does not speak of the faith that Jesus Christ exercised or exemplified, but rather of the faith that Jesus Christ enjoined: The expression διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ does not 'signify *through faith of Jesus Christ*, which is sometimes the meaning of the expression, but *through faith of Jesus Christ*...'; understanding thereby, *the faith which Jesus Christ hath enjoined*, agreeably to the use of the genitive of the agent...' (James MacKnight, *A New Literal Translation from the Original Greek of All the Apostolical Epistles: With a Commentary and Notes, Philological, Critical, Explanatory, and Practical, to which is added a History of the Life of the Apostle Paul* [2nd ed.; London: Longman, 1821], vol. 1, p. 239; cf. p. 242 on Rom. 3:26).

¹² Hunn, 'Debating the Faithfulness of Jesus Christ', p. 15. She also names Johann Peter Lange (p. 20).

approaches could not have expected to find favour, they are now favourite tasks of theologians.¹³ In the very first sentence of his study he asks: 'Is it at all possible to talk about the faith of Jesus Christ? To us this language appears awkward and strange—awkward, since we are used to talking exclusively about the faith *in* Christ; strange, since we scent rationalism behind it.'¹⁴ Apparently, Haußleiter was not aware that indeed some 'rationalists' had thought along these lines some decades earlier.

The Heidelberg professor Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus (1761–1851)¹⁵ is considered the head of an exegetical school called *Rationalismus vulgaris* (as opposed to the radical rationalism of scholars such as Hermann Samuel Reimarus). Eventually, he became one of the most influential exegetes in Germany. Albert Schweitzer characterized him with these words: 'Paulus was not the mere dry-as-dust rationalist that he is usually represented to have been, but a man of very versatile abilities. His limitation was that... he had an unconquerable distrust of anything that went outside the boundaries of logical thought.'¹⁶ Until today he is well known for his 'psychological-pragmatic interpretation' of Scripture, which he applied, for instance, to the gospel stories in his massive two-volume work on the life of Jesus. The title of this book testifies to his exegetical-philosophical programme:¹⁷ he was concerned with a non-dogmatic 'pure history of early Christianity'. The kingdom of God that Jesus proclaimed, in his view, by no means contains an eschatological dimension, but is 'simply' an association of those who want the good and are sincere in their conviction.¹⁸ Inspired

¹³ Haußleiter, *Glaube*, p. 41, with n. 42. He refers to works such as Rudolf Friedrich Grau, *Das Selbstbewußtsein Jesu* (Nördlingen: Beck, 1887).

¹⁴ Haußleiter, *Glaube*, p. 1.

¹⁵ On Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus see e.g. Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, 'Frühliberaler Rationalismus: Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus (1761–1851)', id. (ed.), in *Profile des neuzeitlichen Protestantismus*, vol. 1: *Aufklärung, Idealismus, Vormärz* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1990), pp. 128–55.

¹⁶ Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede* (trans. W. Montgomery; 3rd edn., with a new introduction by the author; London: Black, 1954), p. 48.

¹⁷ Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus, *Das Leben Jesu als Grundlage einer reinen Geschichte des Urchristentums: Dargestellt durch eine allgemeinverständliche Geschichtserzählung über alle Abschnitte der vier Evangelien. Und eine wortgetreue, durch Zwischensätze erklärte Uebersetzung des nach der Zeitfolge und synoptisch-geordneten Textes derselben*, 2 vols. (Heidelberg: Winter, 1828).

¹⁸ Graf, 'Frühliberaler Rationalismus', p. 141 ('Gesellschaft der überzeugten Gutwollenden').

by Immanuel Kant, he was interested in 'moral religiosity without metaphysics'.¹⁹ Accordingly, faith does not denote a person's relationship to a divine being, but rather 'sincerity of conviction (*Überzeugungstreue*)', which results in 'uprightness (*Rechtchaffenheit*)'. This perception of faith is criticized by Schweitzer as trivial: in Paulus's Life of Jesus, though it 'is not written without feeling',

[m]uch is spoiled by a kind of banality. Instead of 'disciples', he always says 'pupils', instead of 'faith', 'sincerity of conviction'. The appeal which the father of the lunatic boy addresses to Jesus, 'Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief', runs 'I am sincerely convinced; help me, even if there is anything lacking in the sincerity of my conviction'.²⁰

However, it is not only in his *Leben Jesu* that Paulus translates πίστις with 'sincerity of conviction', but also in his commentary on Paul's letter to the Galatians and to the Romans, published in 1831. There he explains that the Greek πίστις combines two aspects: first, some kind of conviction which lacks an objective proof (the German *Glaube*) and second, faithfulness and confident trust (the Latin *fides* and *fiducia*)²¹—and these two aspects Paulus intends to express by means of the term 'Überzeugungstreue'. One particularly telling example is his paraphrase of Gal. 2:16, which indicates that he wishes to portray Christ as example or model of faith: there πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ refers to the 'sincerity of conviction of Jesus, the anointed one (i.e., the conviction and the faithful will to obey, which the Messiah not only taught, but which he also showed to be humanly possible and which he sought to implement in his kingdom of God)'.²² Likewise, in Rom. 3:21–2 where Paul writes δικαιοσύνη δὲ θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, his goal is to point to the paradigmatic—and strikingly un-metaphysical—significance of Jesus' 'sincerity of conviction': Jesus the Messiah had, taught, exercised, and proved possible such 'sincerity of conviction' even to the cruellest death, and his 'sincerity of conviction' transfers 'uprightness' to those humans who are likewise

¹⁹ Cf. Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, 'Paulus, Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob', *RGK*⁴ vol. 6, pp. 1065–66, at 1066.

²⁰ Schweitzer, *Quest*, p. 55.

²¹ Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus, *Des Apostels Paulus Lehr-briefe an die Galater und Römer-Christen: Wortgetreu übersetzt mit erläuternden Zwischensätzen, einem Überblick des Lehrinhalts und Bemerkungen über schwerere Stellen* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1831), p. lx.

²² Ibid. p. 9 ('Ueberzeugungstreue Jesu des Gottgesalbten').

characterized by such 'sincerity of conviction'.²³ These two examples could be easily amplified by other instances, which all underline the paradigmatic and normative function of Christ's πίστις and which all emphasize the essentiality and universality of 'sincerity of conviction' and 'uprightness' in the context of Paulus's system of moral religiosity.²⁴

2.2. *Johannes Schultheß: 'Fides Magistri Nostri'*

A friend of Paulus, the Zurich professor Johannes Schultheß (1763–1836) has been described by his most famous student Alexander Schweizer (1808–88) with the following words: 'A determined rationalist..., he did not explain the biblical miracles unnaturally natural—like his Heidelberg friend Paulus—but he ascribed everything that repels reason to a corrupt text.'²⁵ Schultheß is said to side with Paulus on the πίστις Χριστοῦ issue. He is quoted by Leonhard Usteri in his commentary on Galatians as follows: 'πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is "the faith of Christ, faith of that kind that Christ had in God and exercised himself; such faith is it that justifies us (Rom 3:22; 5:1; Gal 2:16; Phil 3:9)" or shorter: "through Jesus we are justified, since we owe to him the paradigm of that faith (*Vorbild dieses Glaubens*)"''.²⁶ Unfortunately, Usteri does not provide a bibliographical reference to this statement, and my own research did not bring to light the exact wording quoted by him. There are a number of similar statements, however, which duly demonstrate that Schultheß was in accord with Paulus—and that, in fact, his deliberations on this issue seem to predate those of Paulus.²⁷ In addition, it is worth noting that in his Latin commentary on

²³ Ibid. p. 164. Cf. the paraphrase of this verse, *ibid.* p. 72.

²⁴ See further the chapter 'πίστις und πιστεύειν', which appears under the heading 'Ueberblick des paulinischen Lehrbegriffs nach dem Galater- und Römerbrief' (Paulus, *Lehr-briefe*, pp. xl–xlvi).

²⁵ Alexander Schweizer, *Biographische Aufzeichnungen, von ihm selbst entworfen*, ed. Paul Schweizer (Zurich: Schulthess, 1888), p. 13.

²⁶ Leonhard Usteri, *Commentar über den Brief Pauli an die Galater* (Zurich: Orell Füssli, 1833), p. 73.

²⁷ Johannes Schultheß, *Revision des kirchlichen Lehrbegriffes: Ein Versuch zu brüderlicher Beurtheilung vorgelegt der Lehrerschaft der vaterländischen Kirche*, vol. 1 (Zurich: Schulthess, 1823), p. 136: 'aus dem Glauben Jesu Christi (aus einem Glauben, wie er hatte und übte)'. Id., *Untauglichkeit der seit 300 Jahren kirchlich eingeführten Katechismen für unsere Zeiten im pädagogischen Betrachte vornehmlich und Idee des einzig besten Leitfadens zum Unterrichte der Kinder in christlichem Glauben und Leben* (Zurich: Schultheß, 1830), p. 40: 'Röm 3:21. Gal. 2:16. Phil. 3:9. ist es der Glaube Christi, ein Glaube, wie Christus an Gott den Vater hatte und bethätigte, der uns gerecht macht.'

James Schultheß even explains Jas. 2:1 along the same lines—presumably as one of the first critical exegetes.²⁸ He interprets the words *τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν* as

the faith of our master (*fides magistri nostri*). When James calls Jesus our master, he calls us his disciples. Upright disciples, as Isocrates says, are used to praise and imitate everything their preceptor says or does. It is for us, therefore, to have, nourish, and exercise the faith that Christ prescribed in his precepts and examples.²⁹

2.3. *The Rationalist Proposal and its Critics*

To sum up, one could say that the *sola ratione* ‘soteriology’ of rationalism intends to realize and perfect human morality, following the optimistic anthropology of the Enlightenment. For Paulus and Schultheß, the ambiguity of *πίστις Χριστοῦ* is a welcome feature to be exploited exegetically to accomplish this task: the role of Christ in the process of salvation has nothing to do with his vicarious death, but is reduced to his being a model and master of a faith, which remains steadfast even unto death. In contrast to the rationalist proposal, no present-day ‘subjectivist’ limits the exemplary function of Jesus to the realm of morality, though generally speaking they too tend to be concerned ‘to show the connection between faith and life, between “doctrine” and “doing”’.³⁰ In my opinion, however, some contemporary ‘subjectivist’ proposals still struggle with how to accommodate the paradigmatic nature of the faith of the earthly Christ with the salvific efficacy of his death and resurrection—or, in traditional dogmatic terminology, how to relate *exemplum* and *sacramentum*.

Generally, Paulus’s and Schultheß’s perspectives on *πίστις Χριστοῦ* did not find much approval. The commentator Leonhard Usteri mentioned earlier asked himself if the inventors of such explanations could themselves seriously believe in the truth of what they were saying.³¹ Usteri is seconded by several

²⁸ Cf. recently Bruce A. Lowe, ‘James 2:1 in the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate: Irrelevant or Indispensable?’, in Bird and Sprinkle (eds.), *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, pp. 239–57.

²⁹ Johannes Schultheß, *Epistola Jacobi commentario copiosissimo et verborum et sententiarum explanata* (Zurich: Schulthess, 1824), p. 76.

³⁰ Mark A. Seifrid, ‘The Faith of Christ’, in Bird and Sprinkle (eds.), *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, pp. 129–46, at 129.

³¹ Usteri, *Commentar*, p. 73.

other commentators and reviewers.³² Karl Georg Wieseler, though calling the explanations of Paulus and Schultheß 'forced', guided by a premonition, urged the field not to entertain the hope of being spared from such strained exegesis in the long term.³³ Certainly, he could not have known that his fears would come true.

III. THE FAITH OF CHRIST IN A MYSTICAL-SPECULATIVE PERSPECTIVE

3.1. *Wilhelm Benecke: Christ's 'unceasing faithful agency'*

The preceding section has shown that the subjective reading in terms of Christ's paradigmatic faith could grow on the soil of 'vulgar' rationalism. It is quite remarkable, therefore, to find another 'subjectivist' in a rather different angle of the ideological spectrum. Curiously, in the same year as Paulus and with the same publisher, Wilhelm Benecke (1776–1837) published his commentary on Romans,³⁴ which was announced in a 'Survey of modern German Works on Interpretation' as follows: This work 'is characterised by original thought, boldness of conjecture, reverence for the divine authenticity of the work, and a decided penchant towards mysticism'.³⁵ Benecke was a colourful personality, both businessman and economics writer, who lived in Germany and England and who had a strong interest in philosophical and mystical-religious issues. Having consigned his English business to his two sons in 1828 and returned to Heidelberg, he devoted his time entirely to his theological studies. After his death, his sons put together a sketch of his life and edited his previously unpublished religious and philosophical writings.³⁶

³² Cf. e.g. the commentary by Leopold Immanuel Rückert, *Commentar über den Brief Pauli an die Galater* (Leipzig: Köhler, 1833), p. 97, and the review in *Allgemeine Literaturzeitung* 218 (1835), pp. 525–27, at 526: 'ή πίστις heißt wohl hier die Treue, und dort die Ueberzeugung, aber nirgends zusammengenommen die Ueberzeugungstreue.'

³³ Karl Georg Wieseler, *Commentar über den Brief Pauli an die Galater: Mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Lehre und Geschichte des Apostels* (Göttingen: Dieterichsche Buchhandlung, 1859), pp. 200–1.

³⁴ Wilhelm Benecke, *Der Brief Pauli an die Römer* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1831).

³⁵ 'Survey of Modern German Works on Interpretation', *Biblical Repertory and Theological Review* 5 (1833), pp. 9–19, at 17.

³⁶ Cf. Guenther Roth, *Max Webers deutsch-englische Familiengeschichte 1800–1950: Mit Briefen und Dokumenten* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), p. 73.

During a visit to Heidelberg in 1834, the famous lawyer and diarist Henry Crabb Robinson met Benecke with the

object...to become acquainted with Benecke's speculative philosophy, in which, certainly, I did not succeed. As one of the means of making that philosophy known to the English liberal public, he was desirous that I should translate the preface to his 'Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans'. I made a translation, with which he was moderately satisfied, but I never attempted to print it.³⁷

Robinson remarks in a later footnote to his published reminiscences: 'Now, after twenty years, not only that preface, but the whole work, has been translated and given to the public by his son William [sc. Friedrich Wilhelm Benecke].'³⁸ Benecke junior praises the insightfulness and impact of his father's commentary, particularly of his introduction ('a masterpiece'³⁹), yet three years after publishing his translation he disappointedly complained that nobody wanted to read the book.⁴⁰

Indeed, it appears that in the current round of the debate no one has taken note of Benecke's novel interpretation of *πίστις*. Already in the first pages of the commentary proper, he pronounces that 'the word *faith* (*πίστις*), so significant in all the writings of St. Paul, will be found to have a twofold meaning; on the one hand, appropriation on the part of man, and on the other, truthfulness and good faith on the part of God'.⁴¹ Accordingly, he wants to understand the enigmatic phrase *ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν* not so much in terms of a gradual development ('from the first dawn to the highest development of faith'), but rather in terms of the dynamics between the truthfulness of God and the faithful trust of humans: God's truthfulness is his 'persevering and affectionate guidance of mankind, by which man is led to faith, to an acknowledgment and joyful acceptance of the proffered help'.⁴² A comparable association between God's faithfulness and human faith will be encountered in Barth's

³⁷ Henry Crabb Robinson, *Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence*, ed. Thomas Sadler, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1869), vol. 2, p. 199.

³⁸ William Benecke, *An Exposition of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans: Translated from the German* (London: Longman, 1854).

³⁹ Friedrich Wilhelm Benecke, 'Preface', in Benecke, *Romans*, pp. iii–xviii, at vi.

⁴⁰ Letter by Henry Crabb Robinson, Mar. 1857 (cited in Hertha Marquardt, *Henry Crabb Robinson und seine deutschen Freunde: Brücke zwischen England und Deutschland im Zeitalter der Romantik*, 2 vols. [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967], vol. 1, p. 483; cf. Roth, *Familiengeschichte*, p. 128, n. 8).

⁴¹ Benecke, *Romans*, p. 71 (= *Römer*, p. 12).

⁴² Ibid. pp. 72–3 (= *Römer*, pp. 13–14).

commentary discussed below, though certainly he presupposes a quite different theological framework.

Benecke returns to this issue when he focuses on the 'faith of Jesus Christ' in the context of Rom. 3:21-2. It seems worthwhile to provide an extended quotation of his exposition in order to gain a full picture of his exegetical and theological points of consideration:

The word *πίστις*, faith, means truthfulness, dependence, as well as acknowledgment and conviction, and is applied in the former sense to God, both in the Old and in the New Testament. Now if, in this place, we take *faith* in the latter signification, understanding the words *the righteousness of God by the faith of Jesus Christ*, to mean that righteousness as a quality in man, which is acceptable to God, and which man acquires through faith in Christ; then we should be naturally led to ask, what is it that he is to have faith in, and how is he to acquire this faith? If man is to believe, there must be some foundation of fact in which he is to believe. Now this fact is the work of Christ, that which He has accomplished for the salvation of mankind. Even from the circumstance, that the Apostle would otherwise leave this object of faith altogether unnoticed, it appears probable that he means to denote it by the faith of Christ, by that which Christ has fulfilled by His faithfulness and perseverance; and this becomes more probable still, from his adding, that His work will become efficacious only through the acceptance of man. If, on the other hand, the 'faith of Christ' were intended to mean *faith in Christ*, Paul would clearly have left unnoticed a subject of the highest importance, and have mentioned the *faith of man* twice, without any reason.... The whole work of Christ must then necessarily include also His rendering us capable of faith, and the sense of the passage will be this: the righteousness of God is manifested through the faithfulness of Christ (*Treue Christi*), through His unceasing faithful agency... Whoever believes, believes through the redeeming influence of Christ.⁴³

Benecke makes several significant points, which strikingly resemble some of the most popular arguments brought forth in support of the subjective interpretation. I draw attention to three aspects, which concern semantics, style, and theology:

1. Benecke is not satisfied with the common rendering of *πίστις* as 'faith', but accentuates the aspect of 'that which gives faith', i.e. 'faithfulness' and 'trustworthiness'.

⁴³ Ibid. pp. 142-5 (= *Römer*, pp. 69-70). Benecke points to the correspondence of the 'faith of Christ' and the 'righteousness of God' (ibid. p. 142 [= p. 69]) and explains that both 'faith' and 'righteousness' include a double dimension, i.e. a divine activity and a human quality (ibid. p. 146 [= p. 71]).

2. Benecke argues that the traditional interpretation creates a redundancy, as Paul would mention 'the *faith of man* twice' for no reason. Many others have taken the same line,⁴⁴ yet in recent times even 'Campbell—a supporter of the christological reading—has advised christological supporters to abandon this argument'.⁴⁵ It has been acknowledged that repetition is a powerful rhetorical means of emphasis⁴⁶ and, furthermore, that Paul could well have intended to distinguish between two different aspects of 'faith'.⁴⁷
3. A third aspect concerns the supposed 'anthropocentrism' of the traditional interpretation. Benecke criticized the translation 'faith in Christ' as lacking an objective referent of human faith and therefore christologically deficient. This is equivalent to one of the favourite arguments of present-day 'subjectivists', who contend that only through a divine act, i.e. through the agency of Christ's faith, can humans truly believe and be saved. Whereas in their opinion the 'anthropological reading stresses the salvific efficacy of the human act of faith directed toward Christ',⁴⁸ only the 'christological reading' correlates adequately human and divine action.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Easter, 'The *Pistis Christou* Debate', p. 38. Among those are Markus Barth, John O'Rourke, Sam Williams, Luke Timothy Johnson, Morna Hooker, Leander Keck, Frank Matera, George Howard, Douglas Campbell, and Richard Hays. See also Haubléiter, *Glaube*, p. 33 ('tautologisch').

⁴⁵ Easter, 'The *Pistis Christou* Debate', p. 39, referring *inter alia* to Douglas A. Campbell, *The Quest for Paul's Gospel: A Suggested Strategy* (JSNTSup 274; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2005), pp. 221–2, n. 19.

⁴⁶ Cf. James D. G. Dunn, 'Once More, ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ' (1997), in Hays, *Faith*, pp. 249–71, at 264.

⁴⁷ Ernst Lohmeyer (*Grundlagen paulinischer Theologie* [BHT 1; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1929], pp. 115–25, 125–33) and Heinrich Schlier (*Der Brief an die Galater* [KEK; 4th edn.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965], p. 165) distinguish between 'principle' and 'act' of faith. See further my *Abraham's Faith*, pp. 273–4.

⁴⁸ Richard B. Hays, 'ΠΙΣΤΙΣ and Pauline Christology: What Is at Stake?' (1997), in id., *Faith*, pp. 272–97, at 277.

⁴⁹ To be sure, the pairing of the labels 'christological/christocentric' and 'anthropological/anthropocentric' contains a pejorative overtone against the second reading and by no means does justice to the traditional understanding, which is certainly not 'unchristological'. Cf. Michael Wolter, *Paulus: Ein Grundriss seiner Theologie* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2011), p. 77, n. 22 (against Campbell).

3.2. *Critical Engagements with Benecke's View*

Possibly, the philosophical complexion and eccentricity of some of Benecke's views⁵⁰ and the fact that these views were offered by a 'non-specialist' may account for the lack of impact of his commentary in New Testament scholarship.⁵¹ A reviewer less benign than the one cited above calls Benecke's commentary an 'unsuccessful product (*verunglücktes Product*)', whose author severely lacks philological talent.⁵² Those who mention or deal with his explanation of πίστις Χριστοῦ in reviews or in their own exegetical works tend to question or dismiss it.⁵³ In his monograph on Romans 3, James Morison deems it 'abundantly evident that the *faith* here spoken of must be the same that is referred to in chap. i. 17, and in chap. ix. 30; in which passages there is no mention of *Jesus Christ*, and consequently no scope for the supposition that the faith referred to may be *subjective in Jesus Christ*'.⁵⁴ A rather nuanced appraisal of Benecke's view, which appreciates its theological impetus, is found in Hermann Olshausen's *Biblical Commentary*. However, he calls

⁵⁰ His ideas of the pre-existence of the soul and of the transmigration of the soul are particularly salient.

⁵¹ This has been Benecke's own impression, too; see, for instance, the letters to his son Friedrich Wilhelm written on 15 June 1831 and 19 Feb. 1835 (*Wilhelm Benecke's Lebensskizze und Briefe. Als Manuskript gedruckt*, pt. 2 [Dresden: Druck der Teubner'schen Offizin, 1850], pp. 71-4, 248-50).

⁵² *Jenaische Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* 47 (1834), pp. 369-71, at 369. See also the devastating review in *Allgemeine Literaturzeitung* 217/218 (1835), pp. 519-25. A rather positive and extended review appeared in Tholuck's *Litterarischer Anzeiger für christliche Theologie und Wissenschaft überhaupt* 19-21 (1834), pp. 151-62.

⁵³ See e.g. Friedrich Heinrich Christian Schwarz, Review in *Heidelberger Jahrbücher der Literatur* 27 (1831), pp. 417-28, at 424: 'der Grund dafür [sc. für die Übersetzung 'durch den Glauben Jesu Christi'] erleidet indessen noch Einsprache'; Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Kritisch exegetisches Handbuch über den Brief des Paulus an die Römer* (3rd edn.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1859), p. 126 (later editions of Meyer's commentary omit the reference to Benecke!); Frédéric Louis Godet, *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, trans. A. Cusin (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883), p. 147: 'The parallel, [Rom] i. 17, suffices to refute such interpretations.'

⁵⁴ James Morison, *A Critical Exposition of the Third Chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans: A Monograph* (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Glasgow: Morison, 1866), p. 220. Several times Benecke and Paulus are mentioned (and dismissed) in one breath; see e.g. apart from Meyer and Morison, Leopold Immanuel Rückert, *Commentar über den Brief Pauli an die Römer* (2nd edn.; Leipzig: Volckmar, 1839), p. 166 note ('völlige Verkennung der wahren paul[inischen] Lehre'); Ludwig Friedrich Otto Baumgarten-Crusius, *Exegetische Schriften zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 2/1: *Commentar über den Brief Pauli an die Römer* (Jena: Mauke, 1844), p. 101.

‘inadmissible’ Benecke’s view ‘that πίστις Ἰησοῦ denotes the *faithfulness* which Jesus exercises. Faith stands here evidently in opposition to the ἔργοις implied in the words χωρὶς νόμου. That, however, the grace and faithfulness of Christ produce faith also in men, is brought forward by him with perfect justice’.⁵⁵

With respect to the present *status quaestionis* we should briefly note that Morison’s appeal to Rom. 1:17 is by no means held to be valid by supporters of the subjective genitive solution—quite the opposite.⁵⁶ On the other hand, most proponents of the traditional view reiterate the point made by Olshausen, claiming that there is a fundamental antithesis between faith and works and that they need to be considered ‘as two pathways for a person to take’.⁵⁷

We should not, however, fail to point to a few sympathetic comments on Benecke’s proposal. Inspired by Benecke, Johann Peter Lange says in his widely used theological and homiletic commentary: ‘We make it, *Christ’s believing faithfulness* [*Glaubenstreue*]’. And he provides the following reasons, all of which make their appearance in recent publications on the issue:

1. The πίστις θεοῦ (chap. iii. 3),⁵⁸ and the coherency of the ideas, πιστεύεσθαι, πιστεύειν, and πίστις θεοῦ, in opposition to the ideas: ἀπιστέω, ἀπιστία, and corresponding with the ideas: righteousness of God, righteousness of Christ, righteousness by faith. 2. The addition in this passage of εἰς πάντας καὶ ἐπὶ πάντας; with which we must compare chap. i. 17, ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν. 3. The passages, Gal. iii. 22; Eph. iii. 12; comp. Heb. xii. 2.... 4. We cannot say of the righteousness of God, that it was first revealed by faith in Christ. The revelation of God’s righteousness in the faithfulness of Christ is the ground of justifying faith, but faith is not the ground of this

⁵⁵ Hermann Olshausen, *Biblical Commentary on the New Testament: Adapted especially for Preachers and Students. Containing the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans* (trans. by clergymen of the Church of England; 2nd edn.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1854), p. 145 note.

⁵⁶ Cf. only Douglas A. Campbell, ‘Romans 1:17—A *Crux Interpretum* for the πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate’, *JBL* 113 (1994), pp. 265–85; Desta Heliso, *Pistis and the Righteous One: A Study of Romans 1:17 against the Background of Scripture and Second Temple Jewish Literature* (WUNT 2/235; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

⁵⁷ This is how Arland Hultgren has recently put it (id., *Romans*, pp. 644–5). Cf. Dunn, ‘Once More’, p. 261.

⁵⁸ Parenthetically, I refer to an interpreter who reads Rom. 3:3 objectively: David Schulz, *Die christliche Lehre vom Glauben: Mit einer Beilage über die sogenannte Erbsünde* (Leipzig: J. A. Barth, 1834), pp. 86–7 note: ‘Denn, wenn Einige nicht glaubten, misstrauten..., so kann, wird doch das Misstrauen dieser nicht das gute Vertrauen zu Gott (τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ) zu Nichte machen, aufheben.’

revelation. 5. So also the *διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι*, ver. 25, cannot be regarded as substantiating the *ἰλαστήριον*.⁵⁹

Notably, one of the editors of the English translation of Lange's commentary, famed church historian Philipp Schaff, felt obliged to add in square brackets his own, opposite stance on this issue: the parallel passages (e.g. Gal. 2:16) 'seem to me conclusive in favour of the usual interpretation that OUR *faith in Christ* is meant here... But Dr. Lange strongly fortifies his new interpretation: CHRIST'S *faithfulness* TO US, taking *Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* as the genitive of the subject'. In a footnote Schaff adds with respect to the function of *διὰ* in Rom. 3:22: 'Faith is the appropriate organ and subjective condition, not the ground and cause of our justification'.⁶⁰

Other commentators have particularly highlighted the nature of Jesus' faithfulness in terms of his faithfulness to death. The slim commentary by the Thuringian pastor Friedrich Lossius, whose analysis could well have been informed by Benecke, has on *πίστις Χριστοῦ*: 'The faith of Christ in Rom. 3:22 is his acceptance of the salvation of the world, which permeates his whole being and which stood the test in love, throughout his life, his teaching, suffering, ministry, passion and dying'.⁶¹ Also, the well-known Romanist and theologian (Carl) Eduard Boehmer contended that 'the faith of Jesus Christ is the faith that Jesus had and communicated'.⁶² Through his faithfulness, Jesus Christ witnessed to the faithfulness of God to his death.⁶³

At the end of this section, we should return briefly to the fourth and fifth points advanced by Lange, as they sound strikingly familiar to contemporary Pauline scholars. In line with Lange, proponents of the subjective understanding claim almost unanimously that the human act of believing cannot be

⁵⁹ Johann Peter Lange (with Friedrich Rudolph Fay), *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, trans. J. F. Hurst; rev., enlarged, and ed. Philipp Schaff and Matthew Brown Riddle (A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures. New Testament 5; New York: Charles Scribner, 1869), p. 129.

⁶⁰ Lange, *Romans*, p. 129.

⁶¹ Friedrich Lossius, *Pauli Brief an die Römer: Übersetzt und erklärt für gebildete und denkende Christen aller Confessionen* (Hamburg: bei Perthes und Besser, 1836), p. 109: 'Der Glaube Christi 3,22. ist die sein ganzes Wesen durchdringende *gottvertrauende* Annahme der Welterlösung, welche er durch sein Leben, sein Lehren, Leiden, Wirken, Dulden und Sterben in Liebe bewährte.'

⁶² Eduard Boehmer, *Des Apostels Paulus' Brief an die Römer* (Bonn: Weber, 1886), p. 9: 'Der Glaube Jesu Christi ist der Glaube, den Jesus Christus hatte und mittheilt' (with reference to Gal. 2:16, 20; 3:22; Rom. 3:22, 26; Phil. 3:9; but also to Jas. 2:1; Rev. 2:13; 14:12!).

⁶³ Boehmer, *Römer*, p. 33.

the reason for a divine act, such as the revelation of his righteousness—rather, an act of God is required. To quote Douglas Campbell: ‘The key point is simply this: human “faith” *cannot function instrumentally within a process of divine disclosure*’.⁶⁴ The validity and implication of this point cannot be discussed here. It is obvious, however, that it starts from a quite reductionist understanding of faith as a human act and ‘makes sense only if one assumes...that the concept of “faith in Christ” is incompatible with, or in some sense minimizes, the principle of “gracious divine initiative”’.⁶⁵ Another highly controversial point concerns the equation of πίστις Χριστοῦ with Christ’s faithfulness to death, which has been made by Lossius and Boehmer. Whereas a review of Boehmer’s ‘odd book’ remarks that there is no Pauline analogy to such an understanding,⁶⁶ many representatives of the new wave of the subjective interpretation hold, quite on the contrary, that Paul’s references to Christ’s obedience in Phil. 2:7–8 and Rom. 5:12–21 present the best and closest analogy to what he means by πίστις Χριστοῦ. As Luke Timothy Johnson puts it: Paul’s ‘main emphasis is on the fact that righteousness comes about on God’s initiative by means of a gift, and on the character of that gift, namely, the profound human response of Jesus the messiah to God in faith, expressed most perfectly in his obedient death as a means of liberation and reconciliation for others’.⁶⁷ To be sure, on this issue the jury is still out.⁶⁸

IV. THE ‘FAITH OF CHRIST’ IN THE DUTCH REFORMED TRADITION

4.1. Hendrik Petrus Berlage: *Christ as the Author of Faith*

One study, almost entirely neglected in the current new round of the debate, is the dissertation by the Dutch theologian Hendrik Petrus Berlage (not to be confused with the better-known architect of that name), written in Latin and published

⁶⁴ Campbell, *Quest*, p. 197. Cf. Hays, *Faith*, p. 159; id., ‘Πίστις and Pauline Christology’, p. 283.

⁶⁵ Thus Mosés Silva, ‘Faith versus Works of Law in Galatians’, in P. T. O’Brien, D. A. Carson, and M. A. Seifrid (eds.), *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 2: *The Paradoxes of Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker), pp. 217–48, at 234. See further my *Abraham’s Faith*, 274–80.

⁶⁶ Wilhelm Weiffenbach, in *TLZ* 14 (1889), pp. 73–7, at 73 (‘Ein wunderliches Buch’) and 77 (‘eine Deutung, die gegen jede paulinische Analogie ist’).

⁶⁷ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (New York: Crossroad, 1997), p. 62.

⁶⁸ Cf. the judicious remarks in Ulrichs, *Christusglaube*, pp. 58–9.

in 1856.⁶⁹ In the first chapters he reviews a number of different suggestions on the problem and refutes or modifies them one by one. He primarily disagrees with the traditional, objective genitive view and the two variations of the subjective genitive reading by Paulus/Schultheß and by Benecke. Berlage's own thesis reflects ideas of Paulus Bosveld (1732–1809)⁷⁰ and Johannes Crellius (1590–1633),⁷¹ but above all his Leiden teachers Wessel Albertus van Hengel (1779–1871) and Jan Hendrik Scholten (1811–85) as well as Lodewijk Ernst Willem Rauwenhoff (1828–89), who submitted his dissertation to the Leiden faculty four years prior to Berlage.

Bosveld argued that, taken literally, the phrase πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ denotes the faith that belongs to Christ.⁷² Yet even if one could be inclined to assume, on first glance, that Paul talks about 'the faith, which Jesus Christ himself exercised',⁷³ one should rather opt for the translation 'the faith, which has its origin in Jesus Christ'.⁷⁴ More precisely, faith refers to 'the teaching of faith, the gospel, the economy (of salvation), the dispensation of grace', of which Christ is the author and which guides human beings towards salvation.⁷⁵ Pointing out that already Johann Salomo Semler (1725–91) explained πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in Gal. 2:16 in terms of 'the doctrine of Christ',⁷⁶ Berlage dismisses this solution, as in his opinion Paul consistently uses the word πίστις in an active sense and nowhere

⁶⁹ Hendrik Petrus Berlage, *Disquisitio exegetico-theologica de formulae Paulinae ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ significatione* (Leiden: Engels, 1856). Only Pierre Vallotton and Karl Friedrich Ulrichs occasionally refer to Berlage, though they do not enter into a dialogue with him (cf. the index of names in Pierre Vallotton, *Le Christ et la foi: Étude de théologie biblique* [Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1960], p. 167, and Ulrichs, *Christusglaube*, p. 301).

⁷⁰ Paulus Bosveld, *Verklaring van Paulus brief aan de Romeinen*, 2 vols. (Dordrecht: van Braam, 1805–7); id., *Verklaring van Paulus brief aan de Galatiërs* (Dordrecht: van Braam, 1802). See Berlage, *Disquisitio*, pp. 49–53.

⁷¹ Johannes Crellius, *Opera omnia exegetica, sive ejus in plerosque Novi Testamenti libris commentarii*... (Amsterdam, 1656). See Berlage, *Disquisitio*, pp. 54–8.

⁷² Bosveld, *Romeinen*, vol. 1, p. 83 ('Een geloof, 'twelk aan den Persoon van J. C. zelven eigen is, en behoort').

⁷³ Ibid. p. 84 ('Het geloof, 'twelk J. C. zelf geoeffend heeft').

⁷⁴ Ibid. ('Een geloof, dat van J. C. zijnen oorsprong heeft').

⁷⁵ Ibid. ('De Geloofsleer, het Euangelie, de Huishouding, de Genadenbedeeling').

⁷⁶ Johann Salomo Semler, *Paraphrasis epistolae ad Galatas cum prolegomenis, notis, et varietate lectionis Latinae* (Halle [Saale]: Hemmerde, 1779), p. 272 ('per doctrinam illam Jesu Christi'); cf. ibid. p. 328, on Gal. 3:23.

'objectively' as in 'the doctrine of faith'.⁷⁷ Long before Bosveld, Crellius had claimed that Christ is the author of faith—of that faith that he taught, revealed, and decreed.⁷⁸ In the more recent discussion, an 'objective' interpretation of *πίστις* in terms of the 'message of faith' or the gospel has been advanced by Wolfgang Schenk and Charles Cosgrove,⁷⁹ but unfortunately their proposals have been eclipsed by the clear-cut antagonism between the subjective and the objective interpretation, which does not really allow for mediating positions.⁸⁰

Berlage's own suggestion is worth mentioning, as a number of his arguments are also familiar to present-day participants in the debate. I point to three aspects:

1. Berlage suggests that, contrary to the common understanding, the 'object' of faith is not Jesus Christ, but God.⁸¹
2. He also argues in agreement with the present course of the debate that the case of *πίστις Χριστοῦ* cannot be settled on grammatical grounds alone.⁸² One has to give due weight to the context: for instance, if in Gal. 2:16 *πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* and *πιστεύειν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν* signify the same thing, this would be a 'graceless tautology (*ingrata tautologia*)'.⁸³ A 'natural' reading suggests, according to Berlage, that the different formulae also refer to different things.⁸⁴

⁷⁷ Berlage, *Disquisitio*, pp. 51–2. Even in Gal. 1:23, *πίστις* does not denote the 'teaching of faith' (*doctrina fidei*), but rather the character of the 'new religion', which is grasped by an act of faith (*ibid.* 52).

⁷⁸ Crellius on Rom. 3:22 (quoted in Berlage, *Disquisitio*, p. 55).

⁷⁹ Wolfgang Schenk, 'Die Gerechtigkeit Gottes und der Glaube Christi', *TLZ* 97 (1972), pp. 161–74; Charles H. Cosgrove, *The Cross and the Spirit: A Study in the Argument and Theology of Galatians* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988), pp. 57–8.

⁸⁰ On a thought-provoking 'third view', which understands *πίστις Χριστοῦ* as an 'eschatological event' (and to which I myself am inclined; see above, n. 3), see Preston Sprinkle, 'Πίστις Χριστοῦ as an Eschatological Event', in Bird and Sprinkle (eds.), *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, pp. 165–84.

⁸¹ Cf. to the same effect Sam K. Williams, 'Again *Pistis Christou*', *CBQ* 49 (1987), pp. 431–47, at 434–5, 442–3.

⁸² Berlage, *Disquisitio*, pp. 13–19. Cf. the summary statement by Debbie Hunn: 'It is theology, not grammar, that continues to drive the debate' (ead., 'Debating the Faithfulness of Jesus Christ', p. 26). Most recently the linguistic aspects have been evaluated by Stanley Porter and Andrew Pitts ('Πίστις with a Preposition and Genitive Modifier: Lexical, Semantic, and Syntactic Considerations in the *πίστις Χριστοῦ* Discussion', in Bird and Sprinkle [eds.], *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, pp. 33–53).

⁸³ Berlage, *Disquisitio*, p. 20.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* ('ut *diversis formulis* significari etiam *res diversae* autumarent').

3. Berlage finally contends that Paul nowhere says that through 'believing in Christ Jesus (πιστεύειν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν)' humans are justified. Rather, his justification language is consistently connected to the noun πίστις, either used in the absolute or with the genitive Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.⁸⁵ So he comes to the conclusion that when Paul uses the formula πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ he has in mind our salvific faith which we put in God and whose origin, cause, and author is Christ (*genitivus auctoris*).⁸⁶ We will postpone a brief evaluation of this conclusion to the end of this section.

In the course of his discussion Berlage also asks the obvious (and nowadays often-repeated⁸⁷) question why Paul never writes about Jesus' 'faith' in an unambiguous manner.⁸⁸ The answer to this question is, according to Berlage, most simple: while it is true that both humans and Jesus have 'faith' in God, the origin (*initium sive principium*) of their faith differs significantly. The human relationship with God starts with acknowledging that God is a benevolent father, who forgives sins;⁸⁹ faith responds to the grace of God. In contrast, Jesus Christ's relationship with God must have a different origin: 'Such faith did not fall into Christ, as he is without any sin'.⁹⁰ This indeed is an objection against the subjective interpretation that is still valid. Charles Cranfield, for instance, emphatically insists: 'Faith is the attitude of one who knows and confesses that he is a sinner'. Therefore, if πίστις 'was in Paul's mind as strongly associated with the situation of the sinner who knows that he has no ground on which to stand before God except God's own sheer grace in Jesus Christ as I think it was, then this would suggest that it would not be

⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 21. As proof texts for his thesis he refers to Rom. 3:22, 26, 28, 30; 4:5; 5:1; Gal. 3:8, 24; 5:5; Phil. 3:9.

⁸⁶ See particularly the fifth of Berlage's 'Theses': 'Formulâ Paulinâ πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ indicatur fides in Deo reposita. Addito autem complemento Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ designatur fidei auctor s[ive] causa efficiens' (*Disquisitio*, p. 128; cf. pp. 51, 61, and *passim*).

⁸⁷ Cf. e.g. C. E. B. Cranfield, 'On the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Question', in *On Romans and Other New Testament Essays* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), pp. 81-97, at 94: 'If the faith of Jesus Christ was as central to Paul's thought as these assertions indicate, it is strange indeed that his letters contain no single unambiguous reference to it.'

⁸⁸ Berlage, *Disquisitio*, p. 120.

⁸⁹ Cf. *ibid.* pp. 103-18.

⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 120 ('In Christum enim, omnis peccati expertem, haec fides non cadebat.').

likely to come at all naturally to him to speak of Jesus Christ's *πίστις*.⁹¹

4.2. *The Leiden genitivus auctoris 'School' and its Critics*

In a footnote Berlage acknowledges that he did not 'invent' his solution; rather, a number of scholars paved the way, above all his *Doktorvater* Jan Hendrik Scholten,⁹² who is also the 'father' of 'modern' Dutch theology, and who is furthermore known as the head of the Dutch critical school, in some ways the equivalent to Ferdinand Christian Baur's Tübingen School. Berlage recounts that when he began his dissertation work, Scholten asked him if he would be willing to support the interpretation of *πίστις Χριστοῦ* as *genitivus auctoris*. However, while Berlage was working on this problem, Scholten seems to have changed his mind. In the second edition of his dogmatic textbook *Dogmaticae Christianae initia*, which appeared two years after Berlage's dissertation, he explains:

The faith, which apprehends God and the divine things... is called in Scripture *the faith of Christ*, i.e. *the faith whose author is Jesus Christ* (*fides cuius auctor J. C. est*)...; on the one hand, since through Christ the access to God is open..., and on the other hand, since faith originates in the communion of Christ (*in Christi communione*)...'.⁹³

Four years later, however, he seems to resort to a *non liquet*:

The question, if in the expression *πίστις Ἰησοῦ* here [sc. in Rom. 3:25] and elsewhere a faith is meant, which is uniform to the faith of Jesus—in the same sense that in Rom. 4:12.16 it is spoken of Abraham's faith (subjective genitive)—or a faith, of which Jesus is the effective cause (*bewerkende oorzaak*), I do not dare to answer, after all that has been written on this.⁹⁴

What strikes the eye in the context of this statement is that Scholten introduces a 'participatory' pattern of faith. On Gal. 2:16 he says: 'Christians participate in the life of faith (*geloofsleven*) of the Lord by believing in him'.⁹⁵ In this comment we

⁹¹ Cranfield, 'Πίστις Χριστοῦ', pp. 96–7.

⁹² Berlage, *Disquisitio*, p. 61, n. 1.

⁹³ Jan Hendrik Scholten, *Dogmaticae Christianae initia: In auditorum usum* (2nd edn.; Leiden: Engels, 1858), p. 67.

⁹⁴ Jan Hendrik Scholten, *De leer der Hervormde Kerk in hare grondbeginselen: Uit de bronnen voorgesteld en beoordeeld*, 2 vols. (4th edn.; Leiden: Engels, 1861–2), vol. 2, p. 77, n. 2.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 78, n. 2.

have, to my knowledge, the first indication of a 'participatory' construal of *πίστις Χριστοῦ*, which has found its most prominent and eloquent representative in the work of Morna Hooker. She has argued that believing is 'a matter of participation'. 'The Christian moves from the sphere of Adam to the sphere of Christ by accepting all that Christ has done and by becoming one with him: even the believer's initial response—his faith—is a sharing in the obedient, faith response of Christ himself'.⁹⁶

The 'participatory' aspect of Scholten's argument reappears in the dissertation of one of his other doctoral students (who was to become one of the most influential Leiden modernists), Lodewijk Ernst Willem Rauwenhoff. He is not content with the traditional explanation (objective genitive) and claims that Paul differentiated between *πίστις Χριστοῦ* and *πιστεύειν εἰς* in Gal. 2:16.⁹⁷ He carefully delineates a number of alternative interpretative options and concludes that the faith that Christ calls for is the faith whose author he is and which is acquired through communion with him: 'If therefore someone is *ἐν Χριστῷ*, then he also has *πίστιν τὴν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*, i.e., *faith which one has towards God in the communion of Christ*'.⁹⁸

The last authority for the 'genitive of author' reading mentioned by Berlage is Wessel Albertus van Hengel. He draws a parallel between the 'righteousness of God', the 'works of the law', and the 'faith of Christ'. In Rom. 3:22 the formula *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* signifies the 'uprightness (*probitas*) of humans, which goes forth from God' and therefore it is most convenient to interpret the other formula, *διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, as 'through faith, put in God, whose author is Jesus Christ (*cuius auctor IESUS CHRISTUS est*)'.⁹⁹ On the other hand, 'if in Gal. 2:16 the words *ἐξ ἔργων νόμου* denote the works, whose author is the law (*quorum auctor lex est*)', then the force of the related antithesis *διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* demands to be taken up in this way,

⁹⁶ Morna D. Hooker, 'Πίστις Χριστοῦ' (1989), in *From Adam to Christ*, pp. 165–86, at 185. Cf. e.g. Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), p. 756.

⁹⁷ Lodewijk Ernst Willem Rauwenhoff, *Disquisitio de loco Paulino, qui est de δικαιώσει* (Leiden: Engels, 1852), p. 89 (see the chapter on *πίστις Χριστοῦ*, *ibid.* pp. 88–94).

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 94 ('*fides quae Deo habetur in Christi communione*').

⁹⁹ Wessel Albertus van Hengel, *Interpretatio epistolae Pauli ad Romanos: Primum in lectionibus academicis proposita* ..., 2 vols. ('s-Hertogenbosch: Muller, 1855–9), vol. 1, p. 318 (see the entire discussion, *ibid.* pp. 316–19).

that it is understood as "the faith, whose author is Jesus Christ" (*cuius auctor IESUS CHRISTUS est*).¹⁰⁰

Overall, the Dutch *genitivus auctoris* proposal has not received a sympathetic hearing. In fact, it was hardly heard at all beyond the bounds of the Leiden theological faculty.¹⁰¹ It is interesting to note, however, that Johannes Haußleiter developed his initial view expressed in 1891 in terms of a *genitivus auctoris*. In 1895 he published an essay with the title 'Was versteht Paulus unter christlichem Glauben',¹⁰² in which he focuses not so much on Jesus' inner life as in his earlier contribution, but on the mysticism inherent in the relationship between humans and Christ. Accordingly, he renders *πίστις Χριστοῦ* as 'the faith, which is brought about by Christ and which rests in Christ'.¹⁰³ A first indication of this development can be found in the preface to his 1891 book *Der Glaube Jesu Christi*. There he points out that (in Gal. 2:16) Christ is to be regarded not as the object, but 'as the author, as the normative principle of the Christian faith'.¹⁰⁴ He cites with approval Adolf Schlatter, who claimed that with respect to its 'origin, content and effect [faith] is dependent on Jesus and oriented towards him'.¹⁰⁵ In Schlatter's opinion, the genitive is capable of producing the whole 'pleroma' of references, designating origin, content, and effect. Both Schlatter and Haußleiter do not appeal to the category of *genitivus auctoris* as does Berlage, but their proposals substantially overlap with his. In a recent contribution Mark Seifrid has picked up this

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 317.

¹⁰¹ A rather extensive review in Dutch by J. Herderscheë appeared in *Godgeleerde Bijdragen* 30 (1856), pp. 481–90. One of the few who referred to Berlage's thesis is August Wilhelm Meyer: 'Against this view we may decidedly urge the passages where the genitive with *πίστις* is a thing or an abstract idea (Phil. i. 27; 2 Thess. ii. 13; Acts iii. 16; Col. ii. 12); also the expression *πίστις Θεοῦ* in Mark xi. 22; where the genitive must necessarily be that of the object' (*Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Romans* [trans. from the fifth edition of the German by John C. Moore and Edwin Johnson; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1873], p. 164 note).

¹⁰² Johannes Haußleiter, 'Was versteht Paulus unter christlichem Glauben', in *Greifswalder Studien* (FS Hermann Cremer; Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1895), pp. 159–81.

¹⁰³ Ibid. p. 178 ('der von Christus gewirkte, in ihm ruhende Glaube'); cf. pp. 170, 179.

¹⁰⁴ Haußleiter, *Glaube*, Vorwort ('als Urheber, als normierendes Prinzip des christlichen Glaubens'). He cites this insight as the 'one modification' (ibid.) of the contents of the essay published a few months earlier.

¹⁰⁵ Adolf Schlatter, *Die Glaube im Neuen Testament: Eine Untersuchung zur neutestamentlichen Theologie* (Leiden: Brill, 1885), p. 556 ('Ursprung, Inhalt und Wirkung').

thread and asks 'Can it be...that the expression "faith of Christ"...describes Christ as the author and source of faith?'¹⁰⁶ On linguistic grounds, Seifrid counters the implicit assumption of both 'subjectivists' and 'objectivists' that πίστις should be read in a verbal sense (*nomen actionis*); instead, '[n]ominal categories such as quality, possession, and source also must come into view'.¹⁰⁷ Theologically, he is keen to point out that 'to believe in Jesus Christ is not first to act, but rather to be acted upon by God in his work in Jesus Christ...that our faith is the work of another'.¹⁰⁸ The theological intention of Seifrid's intriguing proposal is not far from the fundamental theological thrust of Karl Barth's understanding of πίστις Χριστοῦ, to which we now turn.

V. THE 'FAITH OF CHRIST' AS GOD'S FAITHFULNESS—DIALECTICAL THEOLOGY

5.1. Karl Barth: 'The faithfulness of God is established when we meet the Christ in Jesus'

Karl Barth's 'subjective' interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ differs from those discussed in the previous sections, as he understands πίστις in terms of *God's* faithfulness in Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁹ For Barth, 'it is (divine) faithfulness rather than (human) faith which lies at the heart of Paul's theology'.¹¹⁰ Barth's preface to the second edition of his *Römerbrief* identifies Rudolf Liechtenhan (1875–1947) as the 'spiritual father of this innovation'. As this connection is oftentimes overlooked,¹¹¹ it seems justified to quote Barth's retrospective remarks at some length:

And now, a word concerning a matter of detail. A quite unforeseen importance has been attached to the translation of πίστις by—the *faithfulness of God*. Jülicher selects this as an illustration of that 'joyful sense of discovery' of which I spoke—rather romantically it is true—in the preface to the first edition. As a matter of fact, Rudolf

¹⁰⁶ Seifrid, 'Faith of Christ', p. 129.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 134.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 146.

¹⁰⁹ The quotation comes from Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (trans. from the sixth edn. by Edwyn Clement Hoskyns; London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 96.

¹¹⁰ Benjamin Myers, 'From Faithfulness to Faith in the Theology of Karl Barth', in Bird and Sprinkle (eds.), *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, pp. 291–308, at 293.

¹¹¹ A notable exception is Mark Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle: A History of Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005), pp. 6–7.

Liechtenhan was the spiritual father of this innovation. He had first drawn my attention in a private letter to the possibility of translating it thus. He has now put it into print. The protest has been so general that I have cut down the number of passages in which the rendering occurs. My critics will note, however, that I have retained it with uncomfortable frequency in Ch. 3. My purpose in retaining the translation at certain points is to direct attention to a particular nuance (*Schillern*) of the word, which would be missed were it rendered monotonously by *faith*, just as it would were I sufficiently pedantic to translate it always by *faithfulness*.¹¹²

As a side note, I should point out that in his later work on Romans Barth seems to revert to the objective genitive—even in his exegesis of Romans 3¹¹³—even though the subjective interpretation remained to him a valid and meaningful interpretative option throughout.¹¹⁴ In modern scholarship, it is above all James Dunn's exegesis of Rom. 1:17, which endorses Barth's rendering and proposes that the phrase ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν 'can and probably should be taken as a play on the ambiguity of the word faith/faithfulness, in the sense "from God's faithfulness... to man's response of faith"'.¹¹⁵

But who was Rudolf Liechtenhan, this portentous forerunner of such an influential new interpretation? Incidentally, Liechtenhan was married to Johanna Barth, a cousin of Karl Barth, and he was a friend and brother-in-law of Paul Wernle.

¹¹² Barth, *Romans*, pp. 13–14. German original in Karl Barth, *Der Römerbrief* (zweite Fassung), 1922 (Gesamtausgabe, II; Akademische Werke 47; ed. C. van der Kooi and K. Tolstaja; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2010), p. 22. Barth refers to Adolf Jülicher, 'Ein moderner Paulusausleger', *Christliche Welt* 34 (1920), pp. 453–7 and 466–9.

¹¹³ Cf. e.g. Karl Barth, *A Shorter Commentary on Romans* (with an introductory essay by Maico M. Michielin; trans. D. H. van Daalen; Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007). The text of this book goes back to extramural lectures held in Basel in 1940–41. See *ibid.* pp. 26 (on Rom. 3:22) and 27 (on Rom. 3:26).

¹¹⁴ Cf. Barth, *Shorter Commentary*, p. 11 (on Rom. 1:17: Πίστις 'may express not man's faith but God's faithfulness'). At around the same time he offered a peculiar subjective interpretation of Gal. 2:20 in his *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, which introduces the idea of a vicarious, prototypical faith of Christ: 'Daß ich lebe im Glauben des Sohnes Gottes, in meinem Glauben an ihn, das hat seinen Grund darin, daß er selbst, der Sohn Gottes, zuvor für mich glaubte' (id., *Die Lehre von Gott. Teilband 2* [KD II/2; Zürich: EVZ, 1942], p. 620).

¹¹⁵ James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC 38A; Dallas, TX: Word, 1988), p. 48. Reasoner's remark that since Barth 'virtually all commentators today understand the expression "from faith to faith" in Romans 1:17 to begin with God's faithfulness' (id., *Romans*, p. 7) is, however, clearly an overstatement.

Also, he was involved in the religious socialist movement in Switzerland and part of the founding editorial board of the journal *Neue Wege*. In 1935 he became professor for New Testament in Basel. We do have a 'private letter' from 5 May 1917, which documents that at that time Liechtenhan and Barth not only shared their social commitment, but also some of their theological presuppositions. (Below we will see, however, that this letter cannot have been the one that initially drew Barth's attention to the alternative translation—unless Barth's memory has deceived him—for already half a year prior to this letter, we find evidence for the 'faithfulness of God' interpretation in Barth's *Romans* manuscript.) Liechtenstein writes to Barth:

Here [sc. in Rom. 1:17], I want to understand πίστις as *divine* attribute, though I am not able to adduce a *dictum probans* of a notable exegete. I render it with faithfulness (*Treue*), in accordance with the phrase πιστὸς ὁ θεός, which occurs several times in 1 Corinthians. It is characterized by the fact that God remains faithful to the promise given to Abraham and to the gospel foreordained by the prophets... Human πίστις is characterized by the fact that human beings rely on the divine πίστις.¹¹⁶

As indicated, it seems possible to reconstruct the genesis of Barth's interpretation and to pinpoint the time of this 'innovation' even more accurately, namely, by looking at the very beginning, at the first few months of his work on the commentary. From September 1916 onwards Barth was dealing with Rom. 3:21–31 and complained about the heavy 'lumps of rocks (*Felsklötze*)' of this passage.¹¹⁷ The manuscript documents Barth's conviction that rendering πίστις with the 'faithfulness of God' in Rom. 3:21–31 is a meaningful interpretative device which allows him to relate human and divine activity in a theologically adequate manner: 'If salvation lies in πίστις, which itself is rooted in πίστις θεοῦ, then the νόμος... has lost all its significance'.¹¹⁸ His exposition of Rom. 1:16–17, first penned in July 1916, shows that already there he addressed the theological

¹¹⁶ Karl Barth Archiv 9317.87; quoted in Barth, *Römerbrief (erste Fassung)*, pp. 18–19, n. 12; and in id., *Römerbrief (zweite Fassung)*, p. xvii.

¹¹⁷ Karl Barth and Eduard Thurneysen, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 1: 1913–1921 (Gesamtausgabe V, Briefe 3; ed. E. Thurneysen; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1973), p. 152. On 7 Dec. 1916 he wrote to Thurneysen that he had finished his preliminary work on Romans 4 (ibid. p. 166).

¹¹⁸ Barth, *Römerbrief (erste Fassung)*, p. 613 ('wenn denn nun alles Heil in der πίστις liegt, die ihrerseits in der πίστις θεοῦ wurzelt, so hat der νόμος... alle Bedeutung verloren.'). The printed version has the unambiguous wording, which shows that his confidence in the new interpretation had increased:

problem of divine and human activity, but that he had not reached the solution in terms of the 'double entendre' of *πίστις*. In the manuscript he starts from the expression 'the power of God (*δύναμις θεοῦ*)' and argues that it is the power of God which finds 'trust and obedience' in the inner human being and thus brings about salvation.¹¹⁹ In the printed commentary text of Rom. 1:16–17, however, he factually replaces 'the power of God' with 'the faithfulness of God' and contends that it is God's faithfulness which finds 'faith' in the human being.¹²⁰ Apparently, he came to find the concept of 'God's faithfulness' to be a more suitable and tangible concept compared to the idea of 'God's power', or, more precisely: God's power becomes manifest in his faithfulness.¹²¹

In sum, the comparison of Barth's manuscript with the published first edition of *Romans* affords an interesting insight into his exegetical rapprochement to the subjective interpretation, of which he became increasingly convinced. Barth's handwritten comments on Rom. 1:1–17 represent a particularly fluid stage of the writing process, as they were edited, supplemented, and modified substantially in the following months and years; eventually, only 15 per cent of this part of the manuscript made its way into the book.¹²² Based on this evidence, it seems plausible to assume that Liechtenhan—if indeed he is the 'spiritual father' of Barth's innovation—convinced Barth already in the summer months of 1916 of the validity of his thesis (by means of the 'private letter' mentioned in the preface?), when Barth was working on Rom. 3:21–31, and that Barth subsequently integrated this idea into his further exegetical work (and also 'backwards' into Romans 1) with quite some determination.¹²³

5.2. *Challenges and Responses*

The printed study of Liechtenhan, which Barth cites in his preface, appeared in 1919 in the journal *Kirchenblatt für die*

'wenn nun alles Heil in der Treue Gottes und im Glauben liegt, so hat das Gesetz...alle Bedeutung verloren'.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. p. 608.

¹²⁰ Ibid. p. 23. A comparison between these passages also demonstrates that Barth's concept of faith developed from a more 'psychological' to a more 'theological' one (cf. *ibid.* p. 609).

¹²¹ Cf. *ibid.* p. 23.

¹²² Cf. *ibid.* pp. 604–5. In contrast, about 35% of the printed commentary on Rom. 1:18–32 had already been part of the manuscript.

¹²³ See, for instance, Barth's exposition of Rom. 4:3 (Barth, *Römerbrief [erste Fassung]*, p. 113).

reformierte Schweiz.¹²⁴ Obviously, Liechtenhan sought to offer a rejoinder to Paul Wernle, who on the one hand placed Barth rather sympathetically next to Luther and Paul (!), but on the other hand criticized his understanding of πίστις as 'totally impossible'.¹²⁵ Even Liechtenhan, despite his obvious general sympathy for Barth and his exegetical 'innovation', expresses reservation. He joins Adolf Jülicher in attributing the one-sided manner with which Barth implemented this idea to Barth's 'joyful sense of discovery'.¹²⁶ Apart from Jülicher¹²⁷ and Wernle, other reviewers of the first edition took issue with Barth's interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ; among those are Hans Windisch, Karl Müller, and Philipp Bachmann.¹²⁸ Rather than citing their criticisms,¹²⁹ I refer, in conclusion, to Barth's long letter written to Paul Wernle in October 1919. Wernle's review was extremely important to Barth, as Wernle was the typical representative of the liberal theology of the turn of the century and at the same time one of the key figures of the church politics at that time.¹³⁰ Barth dedicates an entire section of his letter to the issue of πίστις and says:

I am puzzled that you reject it out of hand. Especially since I put much effort in giving a voice to the meaning 'to believe', always

¹²⁴ Rudolf Liechtenhan, 'Zur Frage nach der Treue Gottes', in *KBRs* 34 (1919), pp. 192-3.

¹²⁵ Paul Wernle, 'Der Römerbrief in neuer Beleuchtung', *Kirchenblatt für die reformierte Schweiz* 34 (1919), pp. 163-4 and 167-9, at 167 ('gänzlich unmöglich').

¹²⁶ Liechtenhan, 'Frage', p. 192 ('allzu einseitige[...] Konsequenz der Durchführung'). One should note that in a later book on Paul, he neither refers to Karl Barth and his commentary nor hints at his interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ: id., *Paulus: Seine Welt und sein Werk* (Basel: Reinhardt, 1928); see e.g. his comments on Rom. 1:17; 3:21-2; Gal. 2:16 (pp. 62, 121, 191, 193-4).

¹²⁷ Jülicher, 'Paulusausleger', pp. 456-7 (Barth's exegesis of Rom. 3:26 is 'ein Willkürakt ersten Ranges, eine Gewalttat').

¹²⁸ Hans Windisch, *TLZ* 45 (1920), pp. 200-1, at 201: 'Unrichtig ist sicher die ständige Übersetzung von πίστις mit "Treue Gottes"', auch wenn der Verf[asser] versichert, das sei dasselbe wie Glaube. Solcher Gnosis, und mancher anderen kann [ich] mich nicht anschließen.' Karl Müller, 'Karl Barth's Römerbrief', *Reformierte Kirchenzeitung* 71 (1921), pp. 103-5, at 105 ('Mißgriff'). Philipp Bachmann, 'Der Römerbrief verdeutscht und vergegenwärtigt: Ein Wort zu K. Barths Römerbrief', *NKZ* 32 (1921), pp. 517-47, at 519-20.

¹²⁹ The data and the most important quotes are collected in Barth, *Römerbrief (zweite Fassung)*, pp. xvi-xvii.

¹³⁰ Cf. Barth, *Römerbrief (erste Fassung)*, p. 638.

simultaneously, sometimes predominantly. Is it not true that the first hearers of this word *had to* hear both, and that the distinctive drive of this term is due to the double meaning, which is simply lacking an equivalent in German? Is it not true that my interpretation has the advantage that the contexts, in which it occurs, receive a dynamic, an actuality, a meaning, which makes us perceive to some degree the motion of those minds that stood behind these texts...?¹³¹

We leave open Barth's far-reaching question as to what the first hearers would have heard and we ask, in conclusion, a different question: what is it that informed the particular interpretation of those who listened to Paul many centuries later? To what extent does their theological outlook influence their exegetical work? We will certainly not be able to present a comprehensive and conclusive answer, but rather offer a few suggestive remarks.

VI. CONCLUSION

An examination of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century exegetical studies has shown that before Haußleiter and Barth a surprisingly significant number of exegetes voted for—admittedly quite diverging—subjective genitive readings of the syntagma *πίστις Χριστοῦ*. The review of scholarship demonstrates that some of the arguments survived (or have been resurrected or newly invented) in the current discussion, while others have been lost in time or dismissed in the course of the exegetical conversation. Furthermore, aspects of the discussion that seem to stand out in present-day scholarship had not yet surfaced in these earlier years—such as the popular allegation that Martin Luther is responsible for the alleged un-Pauline anthropocentrism of the traditional reading.¹³² Thus, the *πίστις Χριστοῦ* theme proves once again that it is worthwhile to overcome 'exegetical amnesia' and to 'pay a little more attention to the exegetical past than most have hitherto'.¹³³

¹³¹ Ibid., pp. 641–2.

¹³² Cf. e.g. Haußleiter, *Glaube*, p. 41: 'Luthers Glaube erweist sich als der Glaube des Apostels Paulus, auch wenn Luthers Exegese an einzelnen Stellen verbessert werden kann'. See against this view the retrospective remark by Hays, who concedes that his dissertation contains 'occasional sidelong disapproving glances at Luther' (id., *Faith*, p. xlvii).

¹³³ Allison, 'Exegetical Amnesia', p. 166.

Historical hindsight also opens the eyes to the correlation of theological commitment and exegetical conclusions.¹³⁴ To be sure, one should beware of simplistic and premature classifications, but is it by accident that the rationalist Jesus Christ of Paulus and Schultheß is understood as a moral-religious model, as a prime example of a desirable 'sincerity of conviction'? That the mystical-speculative Jesus Christ of Benecke is characterized by his 'unceasing faithful agency', which restores the relationship between the estranged human nature and God? That the Dutch reformed Jesus Christ of Berlage underlines the total dependence of human beings on God in that Christ alone is the origin, cause, and author of our faith in God? Finally, that in the 'dialectical' Jesus Christ of Barth God's faithfulness became a (historical) event, a movement from heaven to earth, which brings back all that has been lost to the world and to humanity due to their distance from God? I will not extend this 'typology' to more recent phases of the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate or to proponents of the other 'party';¹³⁵ it seems patent, however, that for all time periods one's theological and philosophical frames of reference contribute to, and sometimes determine, one's exegetical findings. Hence, what Albert Schweitzer said with respect to scholarly reconstructions of the 'life of Jesus' is also true for construals of the 'faith of Jesus': the interpreters' 'religion' tends to ascribe to both 'its own thoughts and ideas'.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ See, however, the remark in Francis Watson, 'By Faith (of Christ): An Exegetical Dilemma and its Scriptural Solution', in Bird and Sprinkle (eds.), *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, pp. 147-63, at 159, n. 22: 'It seems unhelpful to speculate about the "grounds" or "doctrinal presuppositions" on which "resistance to the notion of the faith of Jesus"' is based.' This is said against speculations of Luke Timothy Johnson in his essay 'Romans 3:21-26 and the Faith of Jesus' (*CBQ* 44 [1982], pp. 77-90, at 80-1).

¹³⁵ See, for instance, the attempt by Seifrid, 'Faith of Christ', p. 129: 'It is fair to say, however, that to whatever extent interpreters have taken up this [subjective genitive] interpretation, they reflect a concern to show the connection between faith and life, between "doctrine" and "doing"—and that with a decided emphasis on the "doing". Likewise, to the extent that "objectivists" reaffirm reading the contested expression as "faith in Christ", they are concerned to preserve doctrine that they understand to be connected with "doing", even if they have left the nature of that connection with life unexplored'.

¹³⁶ Schweitzer, *Quest*, pp. 398-9.